

WINTER WONDERLAND

ediția a XII-a



Secondary School

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ARAMĂ ALEXANDRA-MIHAELA
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A Christmas Miracle


Christmas, the most wonderful time of the year, is when every one of us forgets about the daily responsibilities that steal our joy of living and starts to appreciate the truly important things: family and friends. Most children can't imagine a more beautiful celebration because they get lovely presents from their beloved Santa Claus, but is it the same for all the young people around the world?

The legend says that Santa brings gifts to all kind-hearted children, no matter where they are. But what about orphans? Maybe they have never celebrated Christmas and never received presents. Are they naughty or just forgotten by their families or Santa Claus? One thing is sure: somebody up there loves them and is thinking about them.

I'm going to tell you a story about a girl called Noël. She was seven years old, and her parents abandoned her at four because she couldn't speak. She lived in an orphanage, and everybody laughed at her because of her disability. Because she couldn't defend herself, she transformed her feelings into drawings. She was very talented. However, there was something strange about her paintings: they all showed Christmas fairs with happy children singing carols with their parents.

In another part of the city, there was a woman named Stella, a well-known artist from London, but with no family. Her paintings were very famous, and all the wealthy people in England wanted to buy her creations. Five days before Christmas, the king requested her to make a painting that nobody had seen before. Stella was worried because she thought she wouldn't have time to finish her artwork. And she was right: she did hundreds of sketches, but no one was worthy of a royal. Something was missing in all her paintings and drawings.

Meanwhile, an article in the newspaper disturbed the peace in the kingdom. The king's daughter went missing. The paper said the princess left the palace with an orphan girl named Noël Fitzgerald. Everybody thought the girl harmed Princess Elizabeth, but Stella somehow knew the story was different. Even though the entire country was looking for the princess, Stella was curious to find more about Noël, and why were these two girls connected. She went to the orphanage where the girl lived and asked if she could visit her room. There, she discovered that Noël was a talented artist, but her drawings needed something, just like her paintings. She realized that every picture showed a particular place, the "Winter Wonderland", the Christmas



fair in Hyde Park. She went there and found two small girls: it was princess Elizabeth with Noël sitting next to her.

She talked to them and found out that the two girls were best friends. During a visit of the royal family at the orphanage, Elizabeth asked Noël what her biggest wish was, and the girl drew Santa Claus. She wanted to meet him. Later that day, the princess decided to take Noël to meet Santa Claus from Hyde Park and tell him her biggest desire. Stella asked what she wished for and Noël drew a sketch: in the picture were three people: a small girl, a woman and a man. Above there was written the word "FAMILY". At that moment, Stella discovered what was missing in her paintings: It was Noël.

Her painting had to be about Christmas. This celebration means family, so without someone to spend the holidays with, her artwork would be like her heart: hopeless. She took the two girls and brought Elizabeth to the palace. After that, she asked Noël: "Would you like me to be your family?". Noël nodded her head. She was happy after a very long time.

They went to Stella's house and together finished the king's painting. Suddenly, the church's bell started to ring: it was Christmas Eve. Stella started to sing carols and Noël listened with joy and delight. Then, the little girl looked out the window and saw a falling star. She closed her eyes and wished to sing carols with Stella. Then, a beautiful voice started to sing "*Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright*". It was a Christmas miracle: Noël could speak.

CUVULIUC MAYA


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The story of the little guy on Christmas

A long time ago, there were two boys named Liam and Thomas. They lived in a nice house, and had everything they ever needed. They liked the same things and looked very alike, for just one thing... Liam, was a kind hearted boy, who loved helping people, and Thomas was a selfish person.

One day, on Christmas, they went outside for a snow fight. While they were fighting, they spotted a boy sitting alone on a bench. His nails were dirty, and looked like he never groomed himself. Liam, being a nice kid, he walked towards him and asked if he needed anything. The boy remained silent, but nodded his head. Liam sat next to him and said "Would you like to play with me and my brother?" He didn't reply. "I bet you're hungry, just stay here! I'll be back". After Liam said that, he told Thomas that he will be right back. He went home, and told his mother "Mom, there is a little boy in the park, I want to do something for him, he seems hungry. Is it okay if I give him some food and some of my toys? I want to do something nice since it's Christmas." The mom replies: "Sure, why not!".



Liam grabbed some old toys and a few fruits, and went back to the park where his brother was still having a snow fight. Liam looked for the little boy, and saw him under a tree. Liam said "Hey there, look, I brought you some stuff.. I know it's not much, but I tried my best.". The boy looked at his bag with the stuff that Liam brought for him, looked into his eyes and smiled. "Thank you! I really appreciate it! By the way, my name is Nick.". Thomas saw Liam sitting next to Nick, and asked his brother.."Liam, what are you doing? Don't speak to him! He is a beggar! Let's go home, we are supposed to have our dinner soon!". Liam, hearing his brother saying such words, stood up and said "Maybe not everyone is as lucky as we are, but it is nice to help people whenever you can". Nick started crying, Liam asked him what's wrong and he replied "You see, I used to be as lucky as you are now. But three years ago, my parents passed away in an accident. Ever since, my grandparents took care of me, but they are both very ill. I always wished that Santa would bring me gifts on Christmas, but I guess Santa did not have enough time for me..." Nick continued his story with tears in his eyes and said "I am very grateful for finally having some food and toys, Liam did an amazing job for sharing his stuff with me, the things that he gave me are mostly the things I wished for, but there is one more thing I wish I had..." "What is it?" Thomas asked. Nick replied "I wish I had my parents back, I miss those times so much.. I had a lovely life, but now, I barely have anything to eat..My grandparents are kind of poor, so we can't always afford food. I had to quit school so I could start working. I can chop wood, clean, cook and many others... My life is not as easy as everyone's and I understand that."

Liam and Thomas were affected by Nick's words. Thomas started sobbing, so did Liam. "Why don't you and your grandparents join us for dinner?" Nick smiles, and agrees. Nick wiped his tears, and went back home in a rush. Nick told his grandparents everything that had happened, and they were extremely happy about it.

Nick along with his grandparents, rang the doorbell. Thomas and Liam's mom was very glad about having them over for dinner. After having dinner served, the boys' mom donated some of their old clothes to nick and his grandparents. Nick thanked them, and said "This is the best Christmas ever".

Since that day, Nick, Liam and Thomas had become inseparable bestfriends, and they tried helping Nick everytime he needed it.





BESMECIUC ANTONIA

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Winter Wonderland

“I have never felt like this. It’s the 1st of December, everyone is singing Christmas songs, everyone is decorating their houses, everyone is buying gifts and there’s me. I feel just like the Grinch and it’s not fun at all. My friends and my parents are getting in the holiday mood and I am sitting here debating if I should wait for the next Christmas or not. Just think about! I have no idea what to buy my relatives, I don’t believe in Santa anymore and I feel just like a little brat that says she doesn’t want anything, but can’t wait to see what presents she receives. The snow is not fluffy anymore, it’s not cold and freezing like it was in the good old days, Christmas trees are now made of plastic and we watch movies instead of looking out the window. Now seriously! This is not the Christmas I imagined! I honestly wish I could still think that Santa exists and that his reindeer could fly. I wish I could be the same 4-year-old little me who thought everything is magical and true!” said Ella, looking down with nostalgia, trying to remember the happy moments which she went through as a kid.

“Well, what if we try to recreate the memories? I hate seeing you upset, dear!” her mom told her.


“You don’t get it! I had a beautiful childhood, but nothing can bring back the winters from then” responded Ella, with a sad look in her eyes, almost crying, realizing that everything was changed by the people, including herself.

But little did she know that she could change so much in just one night. She couldn’t sleep, she couldn’t think of anything else but a nice Christmas near the fireplace, in a cozy blanket, with a hot chocolate in one hand and a gingerbread cookie in the other, singing songs and looking at the big tree which she had decorated. She wanted it so much and so she came up with an idea. What if she volunteered? It was the one and only thing she hadn’t tried and the last chance for her to have a beautiful holiday.

She decided to volunteer at a foster care. A sad and special place, where being thankful is not enough. It is a place where you can meet happy, nice and kind children and big-hearted people, who love and share everything they have. It is a place where you realize you have more than you could ever imagine, where you understand that not everyone is as lucky as you are, where you get emotional and you are remembered by the ones in need.

And that was what she did for the next three weeks. She met kids her age who told her all about their lives, their struggles, their passions, she gave them gifts, beautiful dolls and cars, fluffy teddy bears, amazing clothes and sweets and she decorated the entire location with lights, drawings and posters. The experience there changed her point of view, making her a generous and kind teenager.

On Christmas day, she came home with a huge smile on her face, in a red and cozy sweater, with lights and decorations and started dancing on “Jingle bells”. Her mom couldn’t believe her eyes, remembering how sad and bored she had been. Ella was a completely new person. She now loved the snow, the trees, the snowmen, the snowflakes, she now loved Santa, kids, cookies and



the amazing feeling of giving. She now loved understanding others, empathizing and caring and began to see the world with new eyes.

Ella understood that her life was amazing and that winter and Christmas were indeed a wonderful Wonderland!

STAVARACHI RAREȘ

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A Winter Wonderland

In the Wilson family home, the last of their wood was being burned in the fireplace. All of the members of the family of six were piled up next to it and trying to sit as close to the fire to counter the freezing cold inside the brick walls of the modest home. It was the never forgiving winter of 1930 in the U.S. The Wilsons were a struggling family living in the south of Chicago. The Wilsons had four children. Harry, the oldest child, James, that was 2 years younger than him, Lilly, who was the smallest child and John, who was just six months older than Lilly. The four kids never were well off, but this winter was especially harsh. The children shared a room, with two bunk beds without sheets. The whole house was freezing. All of the children were coughing a bit but Lilly had gotten seriously ill. She had gotten pneumonia and had been in a bad state for the last week. The end was clearly coming for her, since the family couldn't afford any kind of treatment or medication. She had entered a euphoric state and then and there, next to the fireplace, with all of her family there she started recounting about a winter wonderland.

"There is enough food for all of us there! There are snowmen and Christmas trees everywhere, and Santa is coming! He lives there! He promised me he is giving us all the toys in the world!" Her eyes started to tear up. "Mom, can we please move there? Santa said we can all come! He said that the ill will be cured, and that once we come, we can stay there forever! We have to go! It's so beautiful there! Please...". And as the fireplace got damper and damper, the light in the little girl's eyes slowly faded away, and as her poor soul left her body, she put on a slight smile and slowly said "I'm finally there. I have reached my winter wonderland!" Her battle with her disease was sadly lost that cold December night. That evening left a large impact on the suddenly smaller poor family. Lilly was buried in the local graveyard a few days later. The house felt emptier in a sense. The small feeling of happiness that was always present during the family's hardships had been brutally removed and hopelessness had taken over. The only thing that remained after the harsh transition had been the love and unity that the family kept clenched to their chest like it meant their life. And it did. It was the only thing that got them through the harsh winter into the more forgiving spring. Winter was finally over for the family. They had regained hope and they were on the slow and long road of recovery. Lilly was still missed though. There wasn't a single day when she wasn't thought about. But all around, things were looking up for the Wilson family.



MĂNTĂLUȚĂ DARIA-MARIA

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Once upon a time...

That's how all stories start, don't they? The power of storytelling is unbelievable. We built so many new worlds and discovered so many new lands. No matter if it was a world full of monsters and dragons or a world where the sun never goes away and there's always a prince who comes to save the princess, it is still shocking how powerful our imagination can be. However, today we are in the real world. Everything starts in a snowy, tiny village at the base of a mountain. Let's start.

Once upon a time there was a little boy looking at the snowflakes dancing in the crisp air. Yes, he was feeling a little sad, since he was missing someone. No, his family was right next door, laughing a little too loudly. He didn't have a dog YET, but that is a conversation for another time. He missed his snowman. Yes, it may seem strange, but the snowman he built a couple days ago immediately became his best friend. With a carrot smile and his grandpa's old hat, the snowman was a very elegant man. He named him Arthur.

But there was a big snow storm the night after the snowman was born, and Oliver, the little boy, didn't get a chance to go check on him.

Oliver made a whole plan for tonight. He will leave the house after his parents go to bed and if he finds his friend alive and safe, he must be back in 20 minutes maximum. But, for the worse-case scenario, he must immediately build a new one (though no snowman will ever be like Arthur) next to his house, so he can constantly see him.

The time finally came. He was climbing over the mountains of snow on the paths next to his house. The Christmas lights in town were magical, looking like Santa threw glitter all over the town from his sleigh.

After several worries that Arthur would just be a small mountain of snow with a carrot on top, something happened. A weird noise came from the tree behind Oliver and, after a few seconds, some kind of creature appeared in front of him.

"Hi, Oliver! My name is Shiny and I have to give you some important information, so listen up! We have protected your beloved snowman from the snow storm, and from now he will always be protected by us, so you don't have to worry about that anymore!"

"S-so he will b-be alive for ever?" asked Oliver, amazed.

"Yes! Even in the summer. Now, your parents heard something and they are about to go check on you! So you might want to.."

"How do you know that?" asked Oliver.

"It's secret. Now, you better hurry!"

"Will I ever see you again?"

"Yes, I am sure you will. But remember, be kind and spread the Christmas spirit! Merry Christmas!"

And just like that, the elf disappeared. Oliver, in absolute shock, ran all the way to his house and found his parents smiling, right behind the door.

“So, you met her! Wow...you grow up faster then we thought” said Oliver’s dad, getting emotional.

“What do you mean?”

“Shinny, Oliver, the elf? She came to everyone in our family when we built our first snowman.... isn’t it so exciting?” exclaimed his mother, with a big smile on her face.

When everyone went to bed that night, Santa and Shinny were slowly closing the door.

“We did a great job Santa! Oliver will love all of the presents, he is such a respectful boy. Do you remember that time a little girl slapped me in the face when she saw me?”

As they were getting in the sleigh, laughing so hard that even Rudolf got scared, Oliver was sitting in is bed, swearing he heard an “HO,HO,HO”.





HOAMEA BIANCA

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Winter Wonderland

Last year, there was a poor family, who lived in a poor, small and dirty house. The windows were dirty and broken, they had no wardrobes, beds, toys, dining chairs, doors and everything we have now. They slept on dirty clothes. and broken. They barely had anything to wear and shoes. But it was a happy family. The parents had a girl named Amalia and a boy named Mario. Both children were around seven and ten years old, but they were very smart and understanding. The children took care of the house together with their parents. They did not know many games because they lived in a more desolate area with few houses and shops, but still they thought of inventing games. They did not go to school, but they learned at home to read and write. The parents loved their children very much and would have done anything for them. They were good hearted and hard-working.

Around Christmas, the family was very stressed, because they had nothing to warm themselves with and nothing to eat.. but the children had other thoughts, such as presents, Christmas tree and many sweets.. So they thought of telling their parents their wishes. The adults were even more saddened because they couldn't offer them those things. They tried to explain that they didn't have the money to buy them. an hour away from their house, there was a store and a pharmacy.

People worked day and night for a month to earn money for food. The frost came, and they plugged the holes in the windows and ceilings with beds and wrapped themselves in fur coats. The children were still disappointed because the holidays were approaching and they didn't have a Christmas tree. They thought of pulling out a tree from the roots behind the house and decorating it. The children were very happy, they stayed all day to sing around the tree. In the evening they went to sleep happy and tired.

The next day a miracle happened that shocked all the people and will never be forgotten. The tree grew tall and had very green leaves even in the middle of winter. Everyone wondered what had happened. The family started shouting of joy. It was so high, that they cut it to the size of their house. With the remaining wood, they carved angels, globes and other decorations. After they carved, they decorated together the tree. They had a lot of fun making the first tree of their lives. When they finished, they admired it and went to sleep.



Three more days passed by playing around it. Christmas Eve also came, a very beautiful holiday, where guests come and a lot of food is prepared. They didn't have all this, but they had each other and the beautifully decorated and arranged tree. They woke up thinking that nothing new had happened. They went to admire the tree again, but what did you see... under the tree there were four beautifully colored presents, with many drawings on them, cute ribbons. They were happy too

Humbled, they hurried to open the presents. Amalia received a very beautiful doll with long, silky, blond and shiny hair, with pink strands. She had golden earrings with hearts. Her dress was puffy and sparkling. Mario received a car blue, with huge wheels, and many stickers. Mother's gift was a well-paid job in the city, and father received materials for renovating the house. Everyone was happy and satisfied.

The mother was very happy that, for the New Year, they will have something to eat. She was amazed by the large, clean room, nicely arranged and all placed on the desks. There, the woman sat on the chair and started working...proud that she will be able to change a lot in their lives.

At home, father started to make tables, chairs and beds.. He put new windows and covered the holes in the walls. The children were very amazed by what was happening. They were already a better family.

Since the New Year they already had everything they could want. The table was full of goodies: meat, biscuits, cakes, vegetables and fruits. It is a magical moment for them. These gifts have changed their lives and things can always happen that they don't expect. MERRY CHRISTMAS!!

GRĂDINARIU DAVID RĂZVAN


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The day before Christmas

Two days before Christmas Eve, I noticed that my cat had a new habit. Every day, after dinner, she used to mysteriously disappear, more often than anytime, so I decided to chase her and see where she was going every time. Next day, in the day before Christmas Eve, after dinner, I hid next to the front door, because she used to leave the house from there and waited my cat to leave the house. After two minutes, I saw her in the dining room looking around, to make sure that she's not chased and then, she peaked the door with her paw and went outside.

After two seconds, I left my hiding spot and went outside as well, after I told my mom that I'm going outside to play with the snow. After I left the house, I slowly chased my cat until a tree. When I was next to the tree, she turned around to make sure one more time that she's not followed, but she didn't see me because I was already behind the tree hiding from her. After that,



I saw her taking left, where was a field. I took left as well and chased her and then, suddenly, she literally disappeared. I ran to the place where she disappeared and I saw a pit in the snow and something was hearing from there, a beautiful Christmas song. The pit had a large hole, so I decided to drop in it.

A second before I was on a snowy field, full of trees without leaves and a second after that I was in a truly magical place. It was like a dream. I was on a street, but it wasn't a normal one, like the one that goes to my school and I take the bus every day from there. It had houses made of gingerbread and they were decorated with glaze. Their windows were made of jelly and the doors was from chocolate and bananas. The trees that were in front of the houses, were from cotton candy, full of toffee in them. The street was from licorice and it was snowing, but instead snowing with snowflakes like usually, it was snowing with powdered sugar and magic wasn't finished.... the air was smelling like orange pie!

Overall that flavors and candies, I saw my cat walking along the street, so I reminded myself what was the plan, but it wasn't that good anymore after discovering this mysterious place. So, I continued following her along the sweet road. I chased her until she entered a building that was basically made from snow. It was like an igloo but ten times bigger than a normal one. I entered the building as well and inside I discovered the most beautiful thing that any child of my age could ever imagine. It was a gigantic room, full of small people... and they were elves! I couldn't believe!!!! But the little people weren't the only amazing thing in that room; there was a lot of mistletoe on the walls and trees full of globes and wreath, but the most important thing in that room, was something that caught my attention. HE was sitting on a red throne and was a very massive person. It had white hair and white beard, so he was very old but, he had an oldness that somehow reflected youngness and a child's soul. He had red gloves, a red jacket with a little bit of white and a red hat. A thought came through my mind "There's no one else on this planet that looks like that and there's no one in this world that dresses like that person". It was Santa Claus!

For one second, I thought that my mind will blow. And then, at his feet was my cat. And she was talking!!!


She was talking to him and she was saying that the elves couldn't manage with the presents for that year anymore. She said that the presents won't be wrapped in time because the elves who read the letters from the children were too tired to continue their work, so the elves who were wrapping the gifts didn't know what each child wished and the gifts could no longer be loaded on Santa's sleigh in time.

After I heard the conversation between Santa and my cat, I decided to help them so, I went to them and said that I could help them. Santa's and my cat's faces were terrified. They didn't understand how I got there. After explaining them how I got there, they understood and gladly accepted my help.

They took me to a chamber where were lots of elves with glasses, who were reading tones of letters. First, one of them gave me a pair of glasses that apparently were magic and they helped me to pay more attention to the text. I started working and at the beginning it was hard to read so many letters, but after some time, I started to use to it and I finished very fast reading my heap of letters and communicating to the elves who were wrapping the presents, what they must wrap. So, I helped the other elves, until we finished with reading and wrapping.

After that, I drank a potion offered by another elf, which gave me the power to load the gifts on Santa's sleigh. After I've been helped by other elves who drank the same potion, we've loaded together, all the gifts and the Santa's sleigh was ready to go on the second day.

After Santa Claus and his elves thanked us, me and my cat returned to home and on the



Christmas Eve, I got an amazing gift. Actually, there were three! The presents were: a pair of magic glasses, three bottle of magic potion and a ticket from Santa. It was a beautiful handwriting on it, that said that I could visit him again anytime and maybe, I could help him with the presents next year too, if I wanted.

BULANAȘI MARIO

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The carved angel

It was Christmas Eve and I was sadder than ever. Until recently, I was waiting for this holiday as something magical. The spirit of Christmas enveloped me in times past, like a mantle of a valiant ruler. I love helping with shopping, cooking traditional dishes, and decorating the house. Of course, we learned carols and chants that are more and more old and together with the gang of friends we started in the morning so that we would have time to walk around the many gates until dark. We were very happy when we counted the hard-earned money and saw that we had not walked in vain.

But now, I was wandering through the frozen forest. A strange stillness surrounded me. The pines and firs were covered with heavy snow flakes. I was dragging my boots stomping through the crunching ice under my feet. "Why my father?"...

Because he was the best father on earth and because the big Boss called him up there, probably with many obligations.

How could I still enjoy the atmosphere and the holidays when it seemed to me that a great injustice had been done to me?


Suddenly, a silver flyer carried by the wind catches my attention. I follow it hurrying my steps and arrive in front of a river. It was covered with a thin and shiny blanket and seemed to be sleeping like in the stories.

An ocean of snow began to fall from the clouds, and bells tinkled from across the river. To my amazement I noticed a group of children dressed in white, and in the midst of them was none other than my father.

I didn't understand anything anymore. Dad had been dead for two months, in that horrible accident. A glass bridge appeared on the surface of the river, and dad stepped on it, approached me with his gentle gaze and handed me a carved wooden angel and said "Merry Christmas, son! I will always be with you !"

I took the gift with trembling hands and looked at my father with emotion. He was right there... He hadn't changed at all, the same bright face, the same walk, the same gestures.

I hugged him and suddenly I felt that everything was shaking and going dark, and my sister's voice woke me up. With screams of joy she was pulling me to get out of bed quickly because Santa Claus had come.



I slowly went down to the tree without feeling in the mood, with my soul crying, because it was just a dream.. I started to look among the gifts. Suddenly, a small, beautifully wrapped box with my name on it caught my eye.

I opened it and inside I found the exact sculpted angel of my dream. It looked like a wooden jewel, with many details. I was most impressed by its perfect eyes and wings. I couldn't take my eyes off him and a deep stillness came over me.

I felt like I had received a gift from the other world and understood that Christmas miracles really do exist.

Since then, the carved wooden angel accompanied me everywhere and became my lucky talisman.

No matter what happens, I now know that I am not alone in this universe and the angel is sending me the energy of the magical holidays that winter.

BURSUC ALEXIA MARIA

cls. a VI-a, Școala Gimnazială „Aron-Vodă”, Aroneanu



Winter's Legend

You'd probably ask yourself how seasons were created or what they truly are. Well, I am here to tell you, because I was there and I know everything. A long time ago, seasons were the same, but they looked different.

The King, which, unfortunately, is my dad as well, had four daughters which were so different. During a meeting with his Majesty's council he was advised that he should let his daughters grow up. When they do, he shall pick the most beautiful one to rule Summer, then the second most beautiful one shall rule Spring, the average shall rule Autumn and the ugliest shall rule Winter. For, back then, Winter was the driest and the most depressing season.


My sisters were so beautiful and still are. The oldest was Myha. Her hair was like a ripped pear under the sun, her eyes were dark like blackberries and she had a nice button nose. The second oldest was the one that cared for me: Lavender. She had the longest hair possible and beautiful green eyes. The youngest, which is Amber, had gorgeous brown eyes like the leaves we see now on the ground and auburn-colored hair.

Myha had the best reputation, together with Lavender. They were considered "the prettiest". I guess I was the ugliest out of all. I don't even want to talk about myself. The number of words I have gained from other people really brought me down. So, all I had to do, was live my life while I watched Myha and Amber get ready every year and argue.

'Oh, Amber, quit it... We all know you and Drifa (which, is my name) are ugly. Can't you see people prefer us?'

'Well, at least I am considered pretty whenever I'm standing behind Drifa.'

'She is a true middle sister. Middles always get ignored and they are always horrible. I can't



believe I agree with you. But don't flatter yourself, Amber dear - when standing alone, or behind me, you are a monstrosity.'

'Drifa is not ugly! And Amber isn't, too! I think Drifa is pretty: I love her blue eyes and her frosty hair. She is magnificent.', Lavender came in.

'Do not worry, Lavender. You don't win with modesty this time, you win with selfishness and with your appearance.', Myha laughed.

'I would die to look like Lavender. I think she will be Summer.', Amber mumbled.

'What did you just say? No offense, Lavender, you are incredibly pretty, with that nice hair and face, but your downturned eyes just ruin it all. So instead, I shall be Summer, and you shall be Spring.'

'I don't care who I will be.', she said.

I don't get it. She was so pretty. If only they'd understand me and how I am feeling. Why are pretty girls feeling ugly? Do they want more? I don't think that 'more' exists. Why are they trying to put in the effort if there is no effort to put in? It's so hard to explain. I feel lonely...

It was the day when we were chosen. We also had to pick a temperature for our season before it was already picked..., but I woke up late and I had to pick FREEZING. It's not like people already hated me. We were sitting in front of everybody, waiting for our seasons. Everyone was looking at Lavender and smiling due to her warm gaze.

'Myha, you are given the Summer Season!' the council announced. The public cheered. Myha was given a slim and tall wand that was covered in daisies and sunflowers. Then, she went to an office to get her season ready. Then it was, of course, Lavender, and she got a beautiful crown. Amber got a wonderful necklace with brown leaves.

It was my turn and everyone laughed. If only this competition could have been about your mind, your actions...! I'm no girl "out of a flower" like Myha or Lavender is, but my heart sure comes out of a whole garden. I only got a bracelet, which whenever I wore it, my hand would freeze. But you know what? I decided that no matter how ugly you are you can make some pretty nice art. So, while I was working for my season, I shook my arm and it started to rain with little frozen flowers. I called them snowflakes and they made a very nice rug for our Earth.

The night before, I stole one of my dad's celebration lights and decorated the whole town with them. I decorated each pine-cone tree I saw with small little jewels and I painted the sky with wishing stars and ink. Then, I made a sculpture of me and my sisters using my snowflakes. It was quite hard but I've managed to invent something called SNOWMAN. I hired a very talented magician from downtown to help me on this trip. I made his beard out of snow and I dressed him up very jolly. I gave him some reindeer that were able to fly. I told him to make presents for everybody, to make every child happy and of course...every parent happy.

In just hours, everyone in the whole world got presents and had their porch decorated. The next day, when everyone woke up, they rushed over to the window and were shocked. Children were playing outside, happy with my work. They even intended to make copies of my snowmen. Lavender helped me make some ice skates even though it was her idea. During her season she has made some pretty nice roller skates and everyone loved them. I didn't want to make it seem like I'd copied her but that idea fit my season well...

Surprisingly, everyone LOVED my season the most and enjoyed it. We had silly hats with pom-poms on top and believe it or not, we even made a holiday: Christmas. It taught everybody that appearance doesn't matter at all but your heart, mind and ambition do.

Now, all I want to say is that you should only care whenever someone talks bad about your attitude but never about your looks. Nothing related to your appearance. Everyone is the same, afterwards. The only thing different about us is our personality. Merry Christmas!



A Christmas gift...

It was a cold winter of 2019. All the animals were in a good mood. The deers went to the warmest place in the city, the bears fell asleep in their caves. The squirrels went to their homes in the trees, but one of them was surprised about what she saw...

That squirrel's name was Taffy. Her fur was the colour of the chocolate, her eyes were black like the charcoal and had a pink nose which was frozen. To her disappointment the little house where she lived was full of snow, but that wasn't the biggest thing that she saw. It was a big red sleigh with eight wonderful reindeers, one of them being special. He was brown and he had a red nose. If I remember the right name, the beautiful reindeer was Rudolph.

Because Taffy was pretty curious she jumped into the sleigh but, to her surprise, in the back there was a big bag with lots of gifts. She climbed it and fell in the darkness of the place where she never went before. She felt like a movement started but she didn't know that something's going to happen... she just wanted to go back to the moonlight.

When she came back up, she saw that she was upper than the city she lived in. When Taffy looked up, she saw a red hat with a white pom-pom. While she was looking for a way down, a long tunnel appeared in front of the sleigh and then, the city where she used to live, disappeared in the darkness of the night.

After she entered the tunnel she passed a few buildings that seemed to be the most important buildings from different countries like Romania, Greece and many more. After three seconds, the sleigh turned to the right and entered a new city named Paris. A huge building appeared. It seemed to be the Eiffel Tower. Taffy was amazed by the view.

The tower was full of lights and from time to time it sparkled. After Taffy finished looking at the view, she felt that she was just standing in the air, and the man who controlled the sleigh disappeared. Taffy was surprised and in the same time terrified because she didn't hear when he got down from the sleigh. What she didn't know was that someone was behind her, watching...

She wanted to jump on the street, but then she realized that was too far and that she didn't know the town. After a minute she felt a deep breath behind her. She freaked out, but when she turned around she saw a man with white beard, white hair, a red hat and red clothes. The man looked at her with a smile on his face and then he took the bag with the gifts and disappeared like he used magic to be invisible. Taffy wanted to know where he got, so she followed him from the sleigh and at the right moment she jumped on his back.

The man looked like he didn't feel that the squirrel jumped on his back, but afterwards he took her from the back of her neck and hold her with his arms. Taffy didn't understand why he entered in people's houses until she realized that it was December 24th. The man was Santa Claus, the kindest, the smartest person which loves giving, not receiving. When Santa looked in her eyes he saw a beautiful soul and a big heart for any creature. They talked about what she was doing in his sleigh and that she had nowhere to go, because her house was covered by snow. Santa immediately offered her to go to his house at the North Pole, after he shared all the gifts,

throughout the world, for every single child.

When Taffy and Santa finally finished the work, they went to Santa's house. After taking care of the reindeers, they went together to "Santa's village". They travelled through Santa's secret tunnel, and they saw the Aurora Borealis, the only thing that keeps Santa's village hidden from the world where we live. The only people that know how to get through the Aurora without being hurt are Mr. and Mrs. Christmas.

While Santa was passing through the multicoloured sky, Taffy was extremely excited that she was going to enter the magic village of the North Pole. When they got closer to the village lots of lights appeared like it was a city of lights. Santa turned around to the squirrel and told her that they finally entered the most wonderful village from the entire world.

They landed on the ground and Santa showed the squirrel to Mrs. Christmas. She was a kind person with a calm voice and a beautiful personality. She gave Taffy an elf costume to wear, and after that the tour of the village started. Taffy met the elves and decided to remain forever in the village like a very honest worker.

She became best friend with Cloudy and she started to build a house for herself and to do the preparations for the next Christmas.





BRUNCHI ORTANSA

cls. a VII-a, Colegiul Național „Garabet Ibrăileanu” Iași



A Happy Christmas Day

Jason had three problems: the girls from his class, his annoying mom, and those big yellow eyes that were haunting his dreams. He was an average teenage boy (14 years old) who had problems concentrating at school and was always bullied by the bigger boys.


Everything started when he was 9. it was Christmas, and he couldn't sleep, when he saw them for the first time: big and muscular creatures with yellow eyes were staring at him thru the window from the now-dead rose garden emotions came floating to him and imidietly started crying from the shock. in time, he got used to the creatures that were staring at him thru the window every year on Christmas day, but they still send chills down his spine when he sees them.

today is the Christmas day and the boy is very exited for the presents he is going to recive and his cousin's visit is making him more happy about today. so happy that he forgot about the creatures that were going to haunt him today.

The day started amazing. Family members filled the boys home and he had a great time.

When the nightmare started, it was almost midnight. Something was watching him from the door. Everyone was asleep and the boy was scared to even turn his face to the thing that was watching him. That's when it hit him. Today The Yellow-eyed Creatures were supposed to haunt him. Ofcourse when he turned, he was so surprised when he saw that they were so close to him like they wanted to kill him, but he will find out later the real reason why they were in his room.

The shock he went thru is unexplained. firs it was the fear then the questions and the last were the screams. His mouth was quickly covered by a huge green tentacle of the monster. But in that moment Jacob came down to the decision to ask the monster what was he doing there, then the tought of the monster not understanding English crossed his mind. The young man thought off all the reasons why the creature could come to him, but he was wrong in one place. He did not think positively and in the spirit of Christmas, and that was what the monster wanted from him. The monster was named Rowan and he was send by his brothers and sisters to find a human to help them learn about the humanly traditions, In particular Christmas. Rowan and his family liked this celebration because in all the years they have watched families spending Christmas together, they were amazed at how connected they were to each other through this tradition, but what they liked the most was the big tree full of baubles and ornaments in the corner of the living



rooms. All they wanted was to have some beautiful traditions to be passed down from generation to generation and the boy could help them with that.

In that night Jacob told Rowan everything he knew about Christmas and the rest of the winter holidays. The monster being one good student he went home with what he had learned that night and told his family everything and they were pleased to find out that they could have finally what they've been wanting for so long. A happy Christmas day.

Rowan and his family decorated the poor little house they lived in with all kinds of garlands and lights, ofcourse with the help of the boy who brought them joy, Jacob.

GRIGORE AIDA-MARIA

cls. a VI-a, Școala Gimnazială „Ion Creangă” Iași




Winter Wonderland

Once upon a time, in a small unknown town, lived a small girl named Josephine. She lived in a medium sized apartment with her mother, her two dogs and her cat. She didn't know where her father was, neither did she ever talk to him. Josephine's mother always told her that her father was at the North Pole, helping Santa Claus prepare presents for all the children on the "has been good this year" list. She also knew that every Christmas eve, while everyone is asleep, Santa comes with her father so that he can see his daughter every Christmas.

Josephine is short, with the biggest, brightest and most beautiful blue eyes. She has got black, long, wavy hair and has a beauty spot on her cheek. She likes swimming and listening to music. Her favourite subjects are Arts, English and Math. She also loves animals, all kinds.

One windy day in October, while Josephine was going to school by bus with her mother, they got into an accident. Unfortunately, Josephine got into a coma that day and was immediately rushed to a hospital. None of the doctors knew how that happened because Josephine was perfectly fine and that was very bizarre.

Suddenly, after about two months of being in a coma, Josephine woke up. But she wasn't at home, neither at the hospital or any other place that she knew. She was very confused and had no idea how to get back home to her mother. That place reminded Josephine of a story that her mother used to tell her at bedtime every night when she was small. She couldn't remember exactly what the whole story was about, especially because she had just woken up from a coma, but she knew that it was about a land usually described as a children's dream world. Although that wonderland was said to be imaginary, it looked way too similar to the place Josephine woke up in for it not to be true. Before she could even start walking, eight elves with a sled walked past her. She was too stunned to speak. Is this really true? Is the winter wonderland actually real? she was wondering. She started to follow the elves. After walking for about fifteen minutes, they arrived at an enormous building which looked like a factory. It was fully decorated and Christmas themed. She started walking in the big hall, thinking that it was the biggest room and



that it was impossible for there to be a bigger room...until she opened a door on the side of the hall. The first thing she saw was a big, chubby man, fully dressed in red with a long white beard reading something off a very long list. It was Santa Claus! He was in the main room of his factory with all his elves. Once Santa saw Josephine, he welcomed her and explained to her that she was in the one and only Winter Wonderland. While Santa was talking, Josephine saw a man next to Santa's throne. He looked familiar. Suddenly, that man turned around. Once he saw Josephine, he ran to her and hugged her as tight as possible. It was true, Josephine's father actually worked with Santa Claus! Josephine was confused, but very happy to finally see her father. After being introduced to everyone, Santa tells his elves to go take the reindeer and the sled and show Josephine around. Outside, it was snowing bonbons and sprinkles. The clouds were made out of cotton candy and the sky was dark blue. There were all sorts of creatures, gigantic, tiny, scary looking, cute, but all friendly. It was like paradise. There were gingerbread and chocolate houses, very beautifully decorated. It was all so beautiful, almost too good to be true!

Suddenly, the sky turned black and there was a loud evil laughing noise. Everyone got scared and quickly ran inside their houses. A lightning struck the whole land and it felt worse than an earthquake. Immediately after, Josephine woke up in a hospital bed, with three doctors and her mother by her side. Josephine was even more confused. What has just happened? Was it all just a dream? I guess we'll never know...

ANTOCI ILINCA

cls. a VIII-a, Colegiul Național „Garabet Ibrăileanu” Iași



London, the 20th of December 2020

Dear Diary,


I am writing this in the comfort of my home, more precisely, in my warm and cosy bed, fascinated by winter's wonders.

Since the beginning of the year I have been dreaming and longing to go outside and watch nature transform into a beautiful landscape filled with delicate and dazzling colours. The icy snow has always been a distant and dear memory of mine which only appears when I watch Christmas movies with my family.

Most people that I know dislike Britain's weather during the winter holiday, but I am ever so grateful for it, as it has allowed me to see the beautiful creation that surrounds me.

Even though, where I live, snow is a rare phenomenon, I believe that the wonders of winter represent a bigger picture than what we see in our everyday life.

I personally think that winter's wonders symbolizes a bigger picture than what is shown or advertised and hyped up about in our society: such as our moral values, our behavior, our way of thinking and speaking, the way we present ourselves to other people, precious little memories,



our guilty pleasures, giving back to people in need and truly doing anything that stands in our power to make the world shine brighter in areas where things were in a shade of ebony black.

I truly see winter as an opportunity to reconnect to dear people even if your relationship with them is distant because they live across the globe. Christmas gives you a perfect excuse to send a card or to face time them, to meet up with them in person, or to just ask how they feel deep down under their polite grins and amusing jokes that they make to forget about the hardships they face in life.

In my family, during the winter period, we find ourselves talking with each other more often, and learning with each day that comes to live in the moment with happiness and not with regret.

I can't wait to see the bright looks which reflect of my family and friend's radiant faces, when I give them a small, but significant gift to show my appreciation towards them for being in my life and caring for me throughout the year.

I would like to remark that winter is only a season, and I would like for everyone to understand that we should look forward to every day that we have to live as healthy people, with a home, a family, food, and everything that we need to fulfil our emotional and physical needs.

We should never wait for new years to come so that we can start writing a list of resolutions that we don't end up doing, but instead change our habits, change our goals into systems and start doing things that benefit our lives instead of scrolling uselessly and becoming envious of the things that others are doing, wear or have.

I'll speak to you soon, Ilinca

BĂTRÂNICĂ IOANA


cls. a VI-a, Școală Gimnazială „Titu Maiorescu” Iași



Winter Wonderland

I never knew this is the way winter would make a change in my life...and not in the way you would think. I have hated winter ever since I was a little child. It was my least favourite season because I would always have trouble going to school by myself and I always watched or listened to my parents fight because of the bills or any other reason. Every time I would wake up shivering even if my mom was holding me tightly in her arms while we were sleeping. My name is Anne White and I wrote this story to help people acknowledge the fact that even the things that seem impossible can be achieved.

My family and I live in a quite small flat around the edge of a very busy city. We live on the last floor which is the 8th one. The building is quite old and has a post-communist architecture style. In our apartment, cracks can be noticed in the corner of the rooms every now and then. The grey carpet which lays all across the floor is dusty and the windows have stains on them which are covered by the ripped courtains that we thrifted a long time ago. My mother adores cleaning, but she cannot do anything about the quality of the furniture instead of replacing it, which we



cannot afford.

My parents always had a passion about Christmas or any other holiday celebrated in winter. Their eyes began to brighten up every time someone spoke about anything related to this season. Our relatives always came to our house for Christmas. Despite the mess, they seemed to enjoy it a lot. They always praised my mom for the turkey she would roast and the cake she baked. I am going to be honest, I also liked them but didn't make it as obvious. As for the scenery, my dad would bring a small fir tree and place it right next to the sofa. Its branches would occasionally fall and its leaves already dried out years ago. I used to be the one in charge to decorate the tree. I would place an exquisite shiny red star I crafted myself on top of the tree and then add little angels, snowflakes and candles (which I stopped adding because last year it almost burnt the tree).

My story begins on 20th of December 2021, when I was in 7th grade. It was not an usual day at all. The night before school, it snowed very heavily. It was mesmerizing watching the snowflakes fall on the edge of the balcony's railing as I prepared my breakfast. I make my way through the tiny glaciers which formed overnight on a quiet alleyway and arrive at school. As I entered class and sat down at my assigned seat. Suddenly everyone spoke to me and was nice to me. For a little background information I was never liked at school. My classmates always made fun of me for not owning lots of stuff. However, today changed for the good. I made lots of friends and they were all nice to me.

A few days forward, it was Christmas Eve, 24th of December 2021. Christmas day was just around the corner. My family was adding the final touches to the house. We get a call from our relatives saying they will arrive early. Mind you they always came at midnight and spent the night over. However, this time they came at 7PM, the time I had dinner with my parents. We offered them the best of what we had left and they seemed grateful.

It was finally Christmas. My heart was pounding. Maybe because I was too curious about the presents I have received. I got up from my bed, and what have I seen the moment I put my foot in the living room? My classmates. Was this a joke? I ask myself. My classmates started pushing each other and fight just to justify who is coming first to offer me my gift. I felt so guilty. I haven't given anyone anything. This was the best Christmas I have ever experienced. Even my relatives started respecting me more. I felt appreciated.


PINTILIE LAURA

cls. a VII-a, Școala Gimnazială „Alexandru cel Bun” Iași



Winter Wonderland

Once upon a time there were two planets, one of fire and one of ice. The planet of fire was called Supernova and the other one was called Frozenova. On the Supernova lived a girl, Mayra who looked like the other people on her planet, having red or brown hair, brown eyes and orange when they used their fire powers, but she was different. All her childhood she wondered



what the snow was like, what the cold felt like, what hot chocolate tasted like and other things which were on Frozenova. And her parents and teachers always told her that snow, or cold, or hot chocolate were terrible and the people who lived on Frozenova were monsters. She was always alone.

But now, she has a group of friends and she is sixteen years old. Today is the day when her class will have to pass some tests to trigger their fire powers. There are five tests and she is so excited. After two hours all her classmates passed but she failed. Mayra is so sad. What if she has no powers? But there is one more test. The one where they take some blood from you to see if you have particles of fire in it. When the nurse approaches her, her fear of needles gets too big and her powers are triggered, but they are not fire powers. She has ice powers! All kids started screaming and the teacher says "Why does she look like us?". The sound becomes more and more faint, a blue, bright light appears and she passes out.

Mayra feels her skin very cold but it does not bother her at all, she thinks it is more comfortable than usual. When she opens her eyes, all she can see is something white, strange and cold. Scared, she shouts "Hello! Is anyone here? I do not know where I am!" Suddenly a girl about her age with blue eyes and white hair appears:

"Hey! You are on Frozenova. I am Annya. What is your name? Where are you from?"

"Hi! I am Mayra, from Supernova."

"Oh, no! Do you want to conquer us? We do not want war."

"Stop, stop, stop! I should be scared. Everyone told me that you are monsters."

"Ha, ha, ha! That is what your leader said. That is not true. We want to be friends but your king does not. So you have fire powers, right?"

"No! I have ice powers like you!"

"Wait! You look like the people who live on Supernova, but you have ice powers!"

"Yes! That is what I think."

"The prophecy! Hey, friends! Our queen arrived!". A lot of people appear.

"Wait! What?"

"The prophecy says that you are our queen!"

"But I do not know your planet!"

"Come with us!"

For a start Mayra finds out what snow feels like, what hot chocolate and gingerbread tasted like. After that she goes in the Christmas Forest where the trees look like candy. A few hours later she visited the whole planet:

"Wow! I feel in Wonderland, but I do not know how to be a queen!"

"That is not a problem! You will become a queen when time comes. Our "monsters" will teach you." Everybody started laughing.

"Oh! Thank you!" Now I want to go one more time in the Christmas Forest!"

Two years later she became their queen, ruling over Frozenova, also known as "Winter Wonderland"!



LUCA MIRUNA ELENA


cls. a VI-a, Școala Gimnazială „B.P.Hașdeu” Iași



The Winter Chest

Having a big family is automatically gonna give you a big house, either you like it or not. And in my case, I loved it! I loved the feeling of lostness but I also loved to explore every hidden corner that existed. And living into a big house also helped you find excuses really fast, which I always loved. For example, two days ago I woke up very late but how could I go to school without an *exploring session*. My mom decided to ruin my mood by calling me downstairs, for breakfast, yelling that I am going to be late for school. But school could wait. Exploring was really more important than learning about things that are not going to help me in life. Right?

So I got off my bed, and quickly ran to the misterious room I never got to enter in. I opened the shacky, old and maybe a bit ugly door and I was pretty much surprised to see that it was dark? Why was it so dark in there? I mean yeah, it was winter and the sun was coming to work later than usually but my room was already full of light. Weird. Maybe the curtains were still on. I heard my brother calling for me so I stopped thinking about the weird darkness and I entered into the room, closing the door after me. Now I was not able to see anything else but black and I could feel the coldness entering thru my clothes, thru my skin, thru my flesh and bones, directly into my heart. “Why is it so cold in here..” Before finding an answer a small and hot light appeared right in front of my eyes. It was a white little light but it still started making the coldness run away from my body, making me feel more safer. The light started moving, which somehow did not creep me out, so I walked after it, amazed by what was happening. The light showed me an old, white chest. I never saw a white chest before and only after five minutes I realized it had snow on and the cold, hard ice was covering it. I continued staring at the chest and I got to the conclusion that I was dreaming, but after I slapped my face a few times I hardly realized that I was surely not dreaming.. Then how was this happening? I fought my demons and I got close to the chest, and when I touched it I felt like I am going to freeze to death, right there, in that moment, but when it opened my mouth automatically opened, in sign of surprise. The chest opened and I looked inside and what I saw made this story imprimate into my brain. There was a small town full of small creatures. I slowly picked u one and it looked like an elf, but much smaller. He looked at me and let out a small scream then he bit my fingers and it really hurt actually, even though he was a little little thing and I was so much bigger. I let him fall back into the chest and I started feeling dizzy, right after a few seconds. I passed out.



When I woke up my heart hurt a lot and I could not see well. I was laying down on something soft and cold. After I got back on my feet I realized that it was snow, and I was not in the dark room anymore. I was in the small town I found in the chest, surrounded by five angry elves and an old woman elf, which helped me walk to her house. The fact that I fitted in made me realize that I was now little too, I was an elf now, but I did not want to remain there. I wanted to go home.

The woman made me some tea and after I felt better she told me that if a human gets bitten by an elf they become elves too, but the good thing was that she could make me big again. She gave me to drink some weird tasted potion and I passed out again. When I opened my eyes I was back in my bed and my mom was next to me, rubbing my forehead. She probably found me into the dark room, passed out.

In the next few days I went into the dark room again, but there was no chest full of snow and ice and surely no elves town, but I found a book. And after I read it I understood what it really happened. The chest was called THE WINTER CHEST and apparently it shows up to only the people that really believe in Santa Claus, and the elves are helping Santa. I couldve see Santa, but I guess that was only bad luck. Who knows, if the town showed up once, maybe it will show up again. But that is a total different story.

MIRON VIVIANA

cls. a VI-a, Școala Gimnazială „B.P.Hașdeu” Iași



Evan

It was a wonderful winter day. Kids were buzzing with excitement by merely looking at the date to see how many days are left until Christmas. Adults were browsing the toy aisles looking for the most unique present for their kids and nephews, if they had one.


Even house pets were happy considering they were spoiled with the most delicious snacks. There was one person who refused to be happy even if everyone around him was so enthusiastic.

Said person was Evan, who at the current moment was looking out the window admiring the breathtaking view. It wasn't that he was sad, he was just lonely. He didn't have any friends at school and his parents at the moment were on a business trip. He was left with his aunt and uncle who half the time weren't even home.

Because of that he didn't even understand the fuss about Winter holidays.

At some point while looking out window Evan saw a shooting star. He vaguely remembered his mother saying to him, back when he was barely an infant, that if he ever saw a shooting star, he should make a wish to it. So, he did.

“I wish that I could understand the feeling of excitement for Christmas. I wish that I could have friends and a family that would stay and celebrate it with me” he wished.



If only he knew that this was the start of a new change in his life.

He should have known that something was wrong from the start because for once when he woke up his aunt and uncle were home and greeted him by announcing that his parents will be coming home later this evening, they also made him breakfast! It was miracle, a true one.

His uncle dropped him off at school and Evan wandered around the school until he reached his class.

His first class was English with Ms. Wilson. She asked him if he could read what they had for homework for today.

“For today we had to answer the following questions:

1. What do you like about Christmas?
2. Who do you spend Christmas with?
3. What traditions do you do for Christmas?
4. What is on your Christmas list?”

“Thank you, Evan, now could you please tell me what you answered with at number two?” said Ms. Wilson

“Of course! For number two I wrote: I celebrate Christmas with myself because no one stays around to celebrate it with me”

“Thank you dear,” said Ms. Wilson hesitantly “Is there anyone else who would like to answer one of these questions?”

From there on the class continued as normal, they actually didn’t write anything that day. They only answered the questions they had for homework and talked about what everyone was doing for Christmas.

When the bell announced the break Evan stayed quietly at his desk waiting patiently for the break to end, but Nathan, Amy and Mellyssa came up to him.

Nathan and Amy were siblings they both had light brown hair and liked to wear light colors. The only difference was that Mellyssa had light blue eyes and Nathan had green eyes. They were both wearing the school uniform. But Mellyssa on the other hand had blonde hair and hazel eyes and was wearing a short-sleeved hoodie with a striped black and white shirt underneath. She was also wearing a pair of black sweatpants.

“Hello! Do you want to be friends with us? I’m Nathan, this my sister Amy and her best friend Mellyssa!”

“I know who you are, I’m surprised you want to be friends with me...”

“Why, so? I’m sure you’re really nice!” said Mellyssa

“Who would want to be friends with the quiet kid?”

“Well, us!”

“Fine.”


Since then, they talked in every single break, surprisingly Evan thought they actually were really enjoyable to be around.

Nathan was loud and funny but knew when to stop joking around, Amy confident and really kind and Mellyssa reminded him of himself. Quiet and patient.

Later that evening Evan’s parents came home and had a Christmas dinner together with them and their aunt and uncle and when he woke up, he was met with an early Christmas present on the table. He opened it. Inside was the video game he’s been wishing for since it came out. He couldn’t wait to play it after school.

During French class, which was the last class of the day, Nathan passed him a note which said:

“Do you want to hang out after school with me and the girls?”



As to not draw suspicion from the teacher he just nodded when Nathan looked at him. After school together they ran around, played games etc. At some point when Evan looked up at the sky, he saw that the sun was setting and that it started snowing.

“Look! Guys! Look up!”

“Huh? What, oh! It’s snowing!”

“Woah! It’s so pretty!”

“Yeah, it really is...”

While Evan looked up at the sky, he reminded himself of his wish, he now understood the excitement of Winter holidays.

When Christmas came around for the first time in his life, he had people which he could celebrate it with.

MĂNDREA CĂLIN

cls. a VII-a, Școală Gimnazială „Titu Maiorescu” Iași




The Old Legend of the Arctic Kingdom

Once upon a time, on the frozen lands of the Arctic Kingdom lived a Beast. It was called *The Mighty Frozen Beast*. It was isolated from everyone and everything. It was the most powerful being that had ever lived in the world. Everyone was scared of it because it had no weaknesses except loneliness. It was believed that the beast possessed The Elixir of Life. When the king heard this tale about this called beast, he immediately ordered his knights to go and search for it till they found The Elixir and if they came bare-handed, they will all be executed.

All of the knights were the same. No one stood out except Hunter. Besides being a knight, Hunter was also a wizard. And one of the most powerful there are. He was determined that he will be the one that will bring the king The Elixir.

The journey wasn’t going to be an easy one. The lands in the Arctic Kingdom were always frozen. Some believed that the reason behind it was that the land was cursed, others believed that it has always been like this but no one ever knew and it remained an unsolved mystery. But our wizard, Hunter, thought that The Beast might have something to do with this. So, finding it might also lift the curse from the Kingdom.

Three days and three nights have already passed. The knights where exhausted so they took a break, but Hunter couldn’t give up. He knew he was close to finding the creature. He had roamed the wilderness until he stumbled upon an ancient door that looked like it was going to open only if he could solve the puzzle that was placed on it. It was really hard so Hunter thought that The Beast was going to be waiting for him on the other side of the magic door. Our brave wizard started chanting out something that sounded like a spell. His magic staff lightened up and all the surroundings started shaking. The magic door also lit up and moments later it finally



opened. Just as Hunter believed, there it was: The Beast locked up in an ice cage. It didn't even flinch. Our knight found out that it was under a petrification spell. He approached it and silently chanted something. The Beast started moving. It finally defrosted, after thousands of years of captivity.

Moments after, The Beast started speaking. Hunter didn't expect The Beast to be able to speak so he was a little amazed. It told him: *Who dared trespass The Mighty Frozen Beast's realm? He shall be punished.* Before Hunter got to say something, a magic beam started glowing from The Beast's hand. There it was: The Elixir of Life. The wizard petrified The Beast again from the neck down and began speaking to it. He said that he came here to grab The Elixir of Life and, in exchange for it, he will allow The Beast to finally be freed from his eternity cage. The beast agreed and gave the wizard the Elixir of Life.

As soon as The Beast took his hand off the spell bottle, everything started rumbling. The surroundings defrosted, The Beast turned into a stunning prince and the curse was broken. Perhaps it was the so-called Elixir that hexed the Lands of the Arctic Kingdom. As soon as he realised this, Hunter knew what he was going to do: exile The Elixir of Life from this world because it couldn't bring anything besides evilness. The prince thanked Hunter that he freed him from the awful prison he was being held captive: the loneliness.

When he got back to the Kingdom bare-handed, the king asked him what happened. Hunter told the king that the Elixir brought the curse upon this land. The king understood and spared Hunter's life and as a sign of thanks for getting rid of the curse of these lands he gave Hunter the princess's hand in marriage.

Hunter was really happy with what he had achieved. He lifted the curse from the Empire and also got to be the next king of the Arctic Kingdom.

The End.

MOHR CHRISTINE


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London's Young Saviour

In London, a bunch of things went the opposite direction everyone thought they would, especially in the Brook dynasty. Even so, have you ever seen a teenage girl, sister of a famous detective, and a boy her age, Marquess of London, fighting for their lives, against the evil upon the Royal family? Let's clarify when it all started...

Athena Myers is the sister of Atlas Myers, the famous detective of London. He often had cases after cases, requested by all the citizens who valued his intelligence. Atlas always surprised everyone in London with his ability of discovering the unknown. However, leaving his family early to take off in his career, Athena was left by herself with her beloved mother, Josephine.



Sadly, her father passed away when she was just a baby, hence her not really remembering him as a person. As the girl grew up, Athena's mom made sure her daughter got the proper education a child could ever receive. On a daily basis, Josephine assured a full schedule of productive activities, such as reading, mathematics, literature, sports and so on. Athena wanted to be a successful detective, just like her brother. She knew she had the brains, the strength and the suitable traits to build up a career.

Recently, after Athena turned 16, Josephine vanished into the world, leaving a note for Athena to read: *"As the chosen one rises, the envied ones below bring him down"*. The strange thing about the note was the drawing she left beside the text. It was a perfect red rose, quite similar to the ones that were planted in the garden of the Royal Residence. That's where the Brook family lives. Sadly, King William Brook was shot in the main hall. Some say he took his own life, and some say he was assassinated by a psycho.

Atlas' sister couldn't just sit and do nothing, reading the newspaper about the Royal case and sobbing to the housekeepers about Josephine's disappearance. She thought that her brother may know something about it, therefore, Athena headed to Atlas' apartment, in the heart of London.

As Athena rushed through the snow, the sun had already set, thus the only source of light on the streets, unfortunately, were the poorly lit lanterns. Suddenly, a young boy, around Athena's age, rushed towards her, catching his breath.

"You're the sister of that famous detective, Atlas Myers, right? I'm Marquess Malcolm Brook. I need your help, someone's trying to kill me!"

"I'm sorry, but I don't have time for this non-sense."

"I'm part of the Royal Brooks. Doesn't that ring a bell?"

"Look, I have somewhere to be, I must go"

As Athena walked away, she knew something was wrong. The girl turned around and saw Malcolm, being choked by a strange man. She ran towards them trying to get the marquess free. The girl managed to fight him off, remembering the karate her mother taught her. Athena looked at Malcolm concerned, as he gathered his breath and thanked her through rushing words.

Suddenly, Athena figured it all out. *"The person who killed your father obviously did it because of his enviable wealth. Duke Nottingham, William's brother, wasn't affected by his relative's death, and it raised suspicions. Furthermore, you are the target of this mischievous plan now, and if William and you are both dead, the inheritance will go to one and only, your uncle, Nottingham."*

Malcolm had to get home on time for his uncle's Christmas fundraisers, but it was all a trick. Athena knew what was about to go down, but she was certain that justice will be served. Slightly scared, they rushed to the Residence, welcomed by a deadly silence. As expected, Malcolm's uncle appeared from behind, attacking his nephew. With a powerful punch, the boy fell on the ground, helpless. Athena fought and fought weakly, but before she almost gave up, the Brooks arrived along with the police guards, arresting Nottingham for the life he took. After helping Malcolm up and thanking him for the trust he gave her, Athena walked out of the Residence, seeing two familiar figures.

"We're proud of you, Athena." said Josephine and Atlas, hugging her tight.



Princess Anastasia


It was a lovely cold day of December. Outside it was snowing beautifully. I had a Christmas movie marathon with my mother, and I spent the whole day watching funny or romantic films, about Christmas, of course. After a few, I went to the kitchen to bring some more snacks. I saw on TV written “Princess Anastasia”. I never heard before of this title. Then, my mother explained to me that Princess Anastasia was a Russian princess. She was the only one in the family who survived after an attack, but her life was still at the risk. To escape, she travelled to France, to meet her grandmother since she was her only relative left alive.

I liked the idea of the movie, so I started watching. Everything was going great, until I told mom that I wish I would be Anastasia. Her life seemed fun, adventurous and never boring. These being sad, the next second I became Anastasia in the flesh. I couldn’t believe my eyes! I was wearing a blue dress, made out of silk only. On my left shoulder I had a blood stain. I supposed I was in the moment when Anastasia left from Russia and travelled to France.

After a while of walking, I arrived in France. There was a lot of white crystal snow, and the sky looked magical. Everything was beautiful, compared to Russia. There was a war and all you could see was blood everywhere and dead bodies. But for now, I was completely safe. I easily found Anastasia’s grandmother. Well, I was Anastasia so I could say I found my grandmother. She welcomed me into her house, after we hugged for one minute. She missed me, and so did I. Her house, who looked more like a magical chalet, had a brown roof and a red door, which was followed by a velvet carpet. I entered, and she gave me some food: soup, boiled potatoes and a croissant filled with vanilla. I enjoyed the meals. My grandmother was an angel. And that’s when I realised something: Anastasia’s life was also rough. I felt some painful feelings since I met her grandmom. Not because of her, she was nice, but because it awakened some memories from little Anastasia’s soul.

I slept for 2 hours in one of the softest beds in the chalet. I was woken up by a knock on the window. When I took a look, it was a boy. A young boy, who was wearing royal clothes. That’s when I realized that he must be the Prince of France. I was wondering what is he doing here, with a burning beat in the chest. I said to myself, scared, that I’m in France now and nobody wants to kill me. So, I gently opened the window and let the boy in the room my grandma gave to me. We started getting to know each other. I was right the whole time. He was the Prince of France. He told me that the war is over in Russia and he found me a place to live safely, but in change he wanted to get to know me better and spend time with me, because that was his dream his entire childhood. To get to know Princess Anastasia, and to talk to her. I told him that the Russians weren’t good people with my parents and I do not wish to get back there, but I will spend time with him, since he is the prince and introduced himself so nice.

Me and the prince went sledding, we made little cute snowmen with the soft snow and we drank hot chocolate with marshmallows in the palace. After a hard beginning, my winter was magical since I was in France, and especially the prince’s kindness did a lot to me. We stayed



really good friends, and now I was all safe, in France.

Succeeding to make Anastasia's story the best, I came back to my life. My mom was surprised of what I did. Winter is so magic! I am glad I lived some special moments as Anastasia!

CIBOTARIU VLAD-MIHAI

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The Lost Man

Many years ago, a hunter lived in a small chalet on the mountains of Sweden with very little food resources. He was very cruel because he would kill every animal for food, otherwise he would hunt them down just for fun. Being very isolated from civilization, he did not like any guests...

A group of people from different places came to visit the beautiful snow mountains from Sweden and enjoy their stay but they went a little too far from the mountain's safe place. As they walked further and further they stumbled upon a shack. They decided to enter and went into the little place. They stepped in the hallway and shouted if someone's there, the man walked up to the teenagers and looked at them confused. One guy decided to take a step and introduced himself. His name was Samuel and he was a teenager at the age of 14, the old man smiled and gave the people a tour of his little rooms, the man gave the people a bowl of hot soup and he was actually a kind man and all the things people said about him were rumors. Samuel asked the old man if he would like to come back to the village and he told the group that he always wanted to but he never got the chance because he got lost and went missing a lot of years ago when he was younger. He lost his memory on a trip because of a storm and lived in the wild building a chalet and hunting animals for the rest of his life. The teenagers heard his words and realized that he was helpless. Later when they were walking up the snowy hill they saw the wonderful sunset covered in tall trees with a frozen lake. Samuel saw a small bit of light coming from a house. When they got to the entrance of the house the old man politely asked the grandma if they could come in as they were cold. She accepted them and granted the people a glass of hot chocolate. Later on, the grandma asked them if they needed any help, Rick, Samuel's friend asked the grandma for directions to the village, she said it was very far away from her house but she gave them a map and told the people to go to the northwest side. After a long walk the group saw a middle-aged man cutting trees. The man knew the teenagers with the old man wanted to go to Jokkmokk as it was very close to his working place and he used to live there. He said that it was not far from where they are now, the man wished the people luck and continued working. After they followed the map's directions correctly they got to the village.

The old man enjoyed all the beautiful glittering lights and the wonderful houses decorated with different things. When they reached the center of the village they looked at the big old tree

full of lights and decorations which had a letter that said "Please take any gift!". The old man got a small orange one in which was a small dog plushie that reminded him about his pet and made him the happiest man in the world. In the end, the man moved to that village and enjoyed his life as a knitter spending his time making little clothes for dogs and children.

STENZLER ALBERT

cls. a VII-a, Școala Gimnazială „Ion Creangă” Iași



The spirit of kindness

Once upon a time there were two brothers named Laurence and Danzel. They did not get up very well. Laurence was a 14 year old grumpy teenager who never shared anything. He had brown eyes and a beautiful straight dark hair. On the other hand, Danzel was a 8 year old shy boy that was always disrespected by his older brother. There were constantly fights between the two. At some point their parents were so annoyed by the repatable argues that they thought about paying a friend to stay with the children. But, everything was about to change !

One day in December, while playing a game of hide and seek, Laurence was hiding in the wardrobe when he noticed that in the back it was freezing cold. The boy picked up some clothes, dressed up and went to check out what was causing the freezing temperature. The amazement he felt was unbelievable. There was a different dimension separated from the normal world through a wardrobe. For Laurence that was unexplainable. He started to walk because something inside him felt that staying for to long is dangerous. The fact that the child was all by himself was absolutely terryfing. Wondering through the unknown without any resources. Until, a huge building made of stone appeared in the distance.

Laurence began the walk to the mysterious warm place. After 30 minutes, he arrived to the building which seemed to be a factory. Inside everything was so cool. There were thousands of elves working at toys, sweets and clothes.

In that moment a very bright light came. It was a spirit but not of any kind, it was The Spirit of Kindness. Rumors said that it can make any dream come true, but it can also bring curses. The boy approaches it and asks:

- Who are you ?

- Me ? I can be seen differently from many perspectives. Some call me Kindness spirit and others say I am meaningless and worthless.

-That is so sad. I am sure you can be happy now because I do not consider you bad. Although I would really like to get back home because there are my family and friends.

-Yes ! Of course I can teleport you back home in a matter of a few seconds. But first I offer you the opportunity to make one of your wishes come true. Say anything your heart desires !

- Let me think a couple of seconds.

-Take your time !

After some very intense soul-searching the boy realized what he had to do. - I am ready ! My wish is.....to.....**ble**ss my brother. Even if he is very annoying.

After all I already have everything that I need for a happy life. Objects are without purpose but helping others is the biggest treasure in the world.

- Laurence, you broke the curse !

- Curse ? What curse ?

-You see, at every ten years a fourteen year old child from the whole world is chosen to come here and make one of his or maybe her wishes to come true. If the choice is about himself, the teenager is transformed into one of the elves and forced to work in the factory for eternity. If the wish is for someone else like yours, you make it become reality but you also gain a positive quality and free the souls of the ones that had a less pleasant faith let's say.

-But who will work here ?

-Oh dear you did not understand ! So, the children's souls were trapped inside an elf body and you just released them!

-That means I am a hero ! I am truly shocked at this point. Anyways I still want to get back home, please !

-Of course !

The boy returned home, hugged his brother and explained him the whole adventure.


IFTIMIE BIANCA

cls. a VII-a, Școala Gimnazială
„Comandor Alexandru Cătuneanu”, Lunca Cetățuiei



Baraba and the sad dog

Polaria was a girl from Russia. She had no friends and no family, she came from an old orphanage destroyed by the president who had to make a hospital. At the age of 14 she was taken to Mrs. Mirsa. A very strict 40-year-old woman. Mirsa knew that Polaria had no school, so she was sent with the goats. The man who owned that property was Mirsa's husband. There was also a boy named Baraba. This boy had a special beauty, I was bewitched when I looked into his eyes. He couldn't speak, I didn't know anything about goats but I tried to learn sign language for him. Every winter I had a great time with him. I had a goat that I loved, her name was Zuikau, she was white with a single horn. For Christmas, the owner gave us both a sweater that we shared every day. The barn was covered with snow. It was very difficult when the goats pushed the gate to get out. I have beautiful memories when Baraba jumped into the snow from the roof to show me that he was brave. In the evening I was watching Baraba because I was in love with him. I noticed that he had wounds all over his body. That evening I was thinking about all the possible



stories about those wounds. The next day, I decided to teach Baraba to speak. After two years for days he started talking normally. I started asking him questions about his life but he kept rejecting me. I started to talk to him from both sides. It's not easy, but with a melted heart he told me that he was found near the garbage by Mirsa's dog. He always thought that his parents didn't want him. I looked at him with sadness because I had the same experience, Baraba started crying. I sat on his leg and started kissing him. He pushed me hard on the bed, his face was red with anger. I was amazed because I didn't expect a nervous behavior. He had gone out in the cold with his dog Burba. It was snowing hard so I took a coat and ran towards him with tears in my eyes. I didn't understand why he was leaving for a kiss, I showed signs that I love him but I see that he is a cold man.

Polaria had fallen in the snow and fainted because she hit her head on a stone.

The next morning I woke up at Mirsa's home. Their house was close to the barn. I had a headache and my body was neutral. I have never felt a sick feeling. The week after the accident it was snowing heavily and Baraba had not come. The goats were being taken care of by the owner because Polaria was lying on the bed.

Two years later I left the stable. I started to forget about Baraba. Now I am a well-groomed lady with a stable job and I have a nightmare when I fell down. *What happened to Baraba? That evening Baraba had dark thoughts full of sad and confused feelings. He reacted like that because he had a closed mind, he didn't know what love means. I found out exactly that night it was found a dead man with no head and next to him a dead dog. It is said that he is trying to put a dog's head in place of his head. I don't know if what I'm saying is correct, but now that I think about it, it might be true... Because he liked to kill goats and chickens. He always told me that raw meat is delicious. It's very strange that I thought it was something normal. The dog must be forgiven. *It's not Baraba's fault, if he had someone to help him, maybe he was a normal person like the others. He didn't know life. He didn't have education or knowledge.

SEGHEDIN IONELA

cls. a VII-a, Liceul cu Program Sportiv Iași




Winter Wonderland

Last year, in the month of January, we spent moments of dream, somewhere in the mountains, far from the crowd and the noise from the city. In addition to the relaxation I had part, I was also able to train for my dream, that to become a well-known athlete. Everything depended on a week but an unforgettable week

I wasn't alone there, I was with my colleagues

class, friends and training group, what a made everything much more beautiful and fun, and time a passed very quickly to my great surprise.



On the way to the mountain, in the bus, everything seemed boring and lifeless. Everyone was doing their own thing and no one was talking, which made me think that I would regret it.

On the first day we were tired from the road, we were focus on training and that's about it. The next day the atmosphere started to relax. We spent the evening talking and playing one another. From the third day we were already spending a lot of time together, not having telephones, we always gathered in a room and the disaster began. I made sure that the room was as far as possible from the teachers' so as not to hear what we were doing. Some of our occupations were beating with pillows, we would fall on the floor, we would start to laugh, we would get up and continue the fight, but as there were many, the noise was just enough. A teacher would come, or several would scold us a bit, he would tell us to make less noise and then he would let us go. But we were having too much fun to stop, and we continued to play until he came again and we had to finish because he sent each of us in the rooms... But we were not sad because we knew that the next day we would start all over again

The fourth day was my birthday. At 00:00 I was woken up by a snowman who had landed on me and said "happy birthday" quite loudly. The next morning, everyone there sang "happy birthday" to me in the chorus. After that we went outside to enjoy the winter and the snow. Outside, the snowballs and rubble started, some made snowmen, others angels, and the rest of us ran to beat ourselves with snow.

On the same day we also went to a place where we could go sledding, snowshoeing and skis. We were especially impressed by the snowshoeing, we went non-stop for several hours until we sadly learned that we should go. But we didn't want to accept and decided to fight a little more with snow. The teachers didn't say anything, enjoying themselves with us and joining our game. After some wonderful moments, we decided it was time to go. But the game continued until the accommodation where we spent as much time as we could.

That evening we gathered again for stories and gossip, games and inevitably the naughty ones.


The following days we had fun and enjoyed the winter, the snow and everything that it offered us winter

CÂMPEANU ȘTEFAN ALEXANDRU
cls. a V-a, Școala Gimnazială „Vasile Conta” Iași



A mysterious Christmas

It was just a usual Christmas morning. Little did I know, it was not going to stay that way. I woke up and I immediately went downstairs, excited to see what presents I got from Santa Claus. One gift stood out more than the others. It was covered with the most beautiful wrapping paper I'd ever seen. Inside, it was a note from Santa himself. It said: "You have been selected to visit the



best theme park: "Winter Wonderland". I closed my eyes for just a second and then woke up in a strange place. It looked like a snowy palace, the walls were all white and smooth. Suddenly, the door opened and a red, chubby man entered. It was him, Santa Claus. Then, he said:

-Do not be scared, young man! Let me explain what is happening. Once a year, on Christmas morning, a child is selected to visit "Winter Wonderland". As you can see, it is you.

-I have a question. Where exactly are we?

-We are at the North Pole, in "Winter Wonderland".

-I can't believe I've been chosen. What exactly is Winter Wonderland?

-Well, there are many things: the snowy cart ride, the jolly candy cane, the magic buffet, the sley ride, the castle ride, the present launcher and many more. First of all, I would like to give you a tour.

The tour was amazing! I got to see the elves in the snowy valley and most of the rides.

I decided to take it slowly and go in the sley ride. I thought it was a really slow and calm ride, but I was wrong. It was the craziest thing I have ever done. Next, we went to the present launcher.

Basically, it was a cannon that shoots gifts. I caught so many that elves had to help me carry them to the castle. Because I got hungry, we went to the magic buffet. There was a lot of food on the table, but there was something wrong. All of it was candy based. Santa then said:

-Don't worry, even though it looks like it, it's not candy, it's really healthy food.

-What do you mean?

-Well, it's magic food and actually it is broccoli, spinach, cabbage and vegetables.

After the delicious meal, I thought we should go on the biggest ride ever: "the rocky mountain". It could reach amazing speeds of 60km per hour. When I saw the view from the top of the mountain, I was mesmerized. That has got to be the best ride ever, right? Wrong. That would be: "the jolly candy cane". It was a massive candy cane that launched up in the air. At the end of the day, I thanked Santa Claus for this wonderful day and for all the gifts he's given to me.

The next day I woke up and it was still the same day. But when I went downstairs, that gift was gone. Was I dreaming or not? The adventure goes on and on...

NĂSTASE ANA MARIA

cls. a VI-a, Colegiul Național „Garabet Ibrăileanu Iași”



Christmas Adventure

I have never liked Christmas. This is such a boring holiday. Especially since I found out that Santa doesn't even exist. In addition, my grandparents and my cousins also come to my house and my grandmother never leaves me alone. This year, unfortunately, we will celebrate this holiday and what is even worse is the fact that my best friend says that she loves Christmas and, unfortunately, she cannot go to the Mall with me, as I suggested.



Today is December 23rd. Everyone is busy, preparing around the house. Only I read a detective book. I see that sleep is taking over me, so I go to sleep. After some time I fall into a very deep sleep that even if there was that commotion in the house I could not wake up. I suddenly wake up, around midnight, because of a song, more likely a carol that came from nowhere. I went to my parents' bedroom, but they were sleeping.

Suddenly, I see that on the ground floor, in front of the entrance door, some lights started to shine like those of the Christmas tree, and the Christmas carol started to be heard louder. I don't even open the door properly when someone pulls me and I notice that I am in a glass globe where I am very small. From the glass globe you can see the view of a family that doesn't seem very rich and also that is crammed into a not very spacious house. There were the following: a little girl, her two brothers, her elder sister who could hardly get here, because of the snow, being away for studies, their mother, the 2 aunts of their children, the three cousins and a dog who, as far as I can see, keeps barking at me, as if he senses my presence.

Suddenly I hear the girl asking:

"Mummy, when will daddy come home?"

"Oh, my dear, there is a lot of snow, so your father will spend Christmas Eve at the store where she is. He will most likely come tomorrow."

Then I find out that their grand-grandfather has just died of an illness. Suddenly, the grandmother suggests eating before giving their gifts.

So they all gather around the table and begin to eat the food that is too little for them. But still, they try to enjoy it even if they are not satisfied. I notice that it doesn't matter what they have on the table, but who they are with. When there is not a crumb of bread left on the table, they decide to exchange their gifts. The first gift the girl receives are 3 oranges, which make her very happy and greedily, she eats them all. Then, her sister receives a kit with watercolors, being passionate about painting. The two aunts each receives a scarf embroidered by their grandmother, the three cousins receive a pair of boots and one brother receives a hat and the second only receives a glove. Saddened by the incomplete gift, he does not say anything, because he knows very well that they don't have money. Grandma gets a chocolate bar and as far as I can see, the father doesn't get anything.

Suddenly I cough and the little girl, hearing the noise, turns to me and starts shaking the globe. I close my eyes out of fear and suddenly someone pushes me. I see that I am in my room. I reflect on what has happened and realize that I have actually dreamed. Then I realize that Christmas is not about presents, it is about the joy of being with your family.

I run to my mother and tell her what has happened to me and I also say:

"I love Christmas! I can't wait for my relatives to come home!"

My mother smiles and tells me that she is happy that I've understood the true meaning of Christmas.





A Christmas story

It's a beautiful Christmas day, the holiday begins for all children and adults. This is the story of an old gentleman who carves in wood, toys, supports and many other useful things. After he finishes, these are taken to a store to be sold. When the old man finishes and leaves with all the wooden sculptures to the store, he drops a toy and a little kid picks it up. He/she is very happy saying:

" I will call you Santa Claus, for the gift given."

Then it occurs to Santa to offer all the things he creates to people on Christmas Eve.

After the remarkable meeting with the little kid, he hurries home, put on the red suit and leaves with all his things on his way.

As he rushes down the streets, Santa finds 2 elves on the road, so he asks them:

"Don't you want to make toys?"

"Sure." Say the elves with a contagious smile.

Santa takes the elves home. Then he meets Mrs. Christmas who says:

"Who are they?"

"They are some elves, they will help me make more toys."

"Toys for what?"

"To give as a gift to children all over the world"

"And will you carry the toys in the back, Ms.?"

"But with what else?"

"With a sleigh"

"Where do you get the money for such a big sleigh?"

"Give me a piece of wood and I will carve you a sleigh and some reindeers"

"Good"

Said and done. 2 minutes later a sleigh and some wooden reindeer appear in the old mans' yard. Suddenly one of the reindeer comes to life and then another one and another one and the sleigh lifts off the ground.

"We are flying! Hurray!" says one of the reindeers.

"What a big and red nose I have!" says another one.


"What is this?" asks lady Christmas.

"Christmas magic." says the old man.

Then Santa Claus gets into the sleigh with his wife and they set off to bring children joy.

Maria is on the street making a snowman, suddenly she sees a sleigh coming down the hill at a very high speed. It stops directly in front of her, it was Mrs. and Mr. Christmas. The lady asks the girl:

"What are you doing here so late, why don't you stay at home, maybe you will have a surprise later?"



"I was putting a cup of milk and some carrots because I heard that someone would come tonight and give me toys."

Santa comes down with his sleigh, gives her a gift, drinks the milk and feeds the reindeers.

"Thank you very much! When will you come again?"

"With great love, we will come again next year! But next time you have to put a letter in your mailbox to know what to offer you."

Santa goes on foot to every house in the village, where he finds a very good child who learns a lot. Santa asks him:

"Don't you want to be my little helper?"

"Yes, why not?"

Santa gives him the gift and takes the boy with him.

After visiting many houses, he manages to finish giving gifts to everyone in the world.

When they get home, they all go to bed. The next morning, all the children were outside playing with their toys from Santa. Yesterday's child that was taken by Mr. and Mrs. Christmas became a lady about the age of Santa Claus, whose first name was Nicola. Her birthday was on December 6 at 00:00. From the following year she finds a husband who from then on gives sweets to the children on his wife's birthday because sweets were Nicola's favorite.

Every year it happens the same, except that Santa has enriched his helpers with elves who he shares with Nicola's husband who makes sweets as Santa makes toys and desired items for his elves.

Santa Claus goes 1 day before Christmas to take the letters from each post office. The first time Santa gave the gifts to the children, he put a video camera to which he has access to see if the children are good or naughty, the naughty ones being punished by not receiving gifts and the good ones being blessed with everything they want.

CIUCHI ȘTEFANIA FLORENTINA


cls. a VI-a, Școala Gimnazială „Alecă Russo” Iași



Winter Wonderland

Alice was a little girl who wanted to meet Santa Claus and his elves but her father couldn't accept that his daughter liked dreaming. Alice didn't know how to tell her father the desire she had to become a Santa's elf. She was quite affected by this thing. After many days of waiting, Christmas is coming at last. On Christmas Eve night she went to bed thinking of Santa Claus. At midnight all of a sudden, a bell started to ring. She woke up and went to the window and guess what, it was just started to snow.

She started running happily towards the door of the house. When she went out, she suddenly entered into the Wonderland.



In that place everything was like in a fairy tale. So wonderful! The elves were in a hurry, some of them carrying candies others presents. When they saw her, they were amazed and gathered around her whispering because they had never seen such a beautiful gest before. At some point Santa Claus appeared in front of the little girl. He said: "Alice do you know why you're here?"

"I really don't, Santa!" said the little girl surprised.

"You are a very good child and I thought to turn you into one of my elves. I know how much you wish for this. The girl froze because she couldn't believe what Santa told her.

"But my father will be worried about me, if I do this".

"Don't worry my dear child! The time in your world will stay still and he won't even notice that you are missing".

While Santa was talking to Alice some elves were loading Santa's sleigh with presents. Everyone was working hard because it was late and everything had to be finished in time. When everything was ready Santa invited the little girl to join him in delivering the presents to the kids. He handed the map to the children. Alice was so busy with Santa's presents that she didn't even notice when the morning came.

When Santa saw the first rays of light, he realized how late it was and took the little girl back home.

The sun was shining when, Alice was almost awake and she didn't know what to believe. It was a dream or reality.

She was thinking while staying in her bed if she should tell her father what happened, but she didn't know if he will believe her.

Determined she gets out of bed and goes to her father who was sitting near the Christmas tree waiting for her to open the presents. Sitting next to her father they started to open the gifts and Alice began to tell him everything with fear. The father listened to her to the end without interrupting her and said that not every dream is also reality. Finishing to open the presents she went to her room quite sad because her father didn't believe her.

She asked Santa to send her a sign so she can prove to her father that it wasn't just a dream.


LUNGU ANASTASIA

cls. a VII-a, Colegiul Național Pedagogic „Vasile Lupu” Iași



Winter

I still couldn't believe this was happening! No snow, no charm! I had hoped it would get colder and colder before it snowed, but now there was no hope. I'd got up first thing in the morning only to be disappointed again and see the same bare, snowless ground as on previous



days. On top of that, the weather guys were predicting good weather and rising temperatures. Most people were happy, but not me. It was a nightmare! I had been waiting for snow since early winter, and now it was almost Christmas and still no snow.

"Did you get up early to see if it snowed?" my mother asked.

"Haaaah!" I sighed approvingly.

"Don't be sad. I'm sure it will snow eventually."

"I hope so."

"Wouldn't you like to go to your grandmother's?" my mother suddenly suggested. "I'm sure she'll be glad to see you and tell you a story."

"What a good idea! I'll be off in a minute!" And saying this I quickly changed and ran to grandma's house. As she didn't live too far, I reached her quite quickly. I knocked on the door and a soft voice invited me in. I entered the house and walked to the big room where Grandma usually stayed. To my great surprise, my friends Maria, Teodora and Denisa were also in the room.

"Good morning, grandma! Hello girls!" I said as I took off my jacket.

"Hi!" the girls replied at the same time.

"Hello, my dear!" said grandma. "Have you come to listen to a story?" Seeing my approval, Grandma said. "I just told the girls about the Winter Fairy, the one who brings the snow."

"Too bad she doesn't exist", I said sadly. "I would have liked to ask her to make it snow."

"But she does exist, my dear. In the woods over there, she pointed to the woods near her house. Her castle is somewhere hidden in the woods. They say only the well-meaning can find her castle, because it keeps moving for the safety of the Missus."

"Really? I didn't know. Could I go look for her?"

"Of course you could! But know that she'll only show herself to you if she wants to."

"We're coming!" the girls said immediately. "You didn't think we'd leave you alone in a forest!"

I smiled at them as I pulled my jacket on and put on my shoes.

"Be careful and don't get lost", Grandma told us as we left the house.

"We'll be careful grandma!" I shouted as I hurried off into the woods.

We all entered the woods and continued walking in silence. Luckily, the fairy had nothing fit to discuss with us, so her castle appeared before us soon enough. It opened its gates, and a gentle voice invited us inside. The castle was lovely and beautifully arranged, but I didn't linger to admire its splendour, as I wanted to talk to the Snow Fairy as soon as possible.

"Good afternoon, Your Majesty, I said, bending down to the ground. "Please forgive our boldness, but we have come to Your Highness to ask You to send us snow."

"What? The snow hasn't reached you yet? Lazy clouds!" And saying these words, the Winter Fairy rose into the air and cast a spectacular spell sending it towards the stubborn clouds. As soon as the spell reached them, the clouds flew away in a hurry to give the snow.

"Thank you very much!" we said at the same time. "And please excuse us for the inconvenience!"

"It's no problem", said the Fairy disappearing herself and the castle around us, and we each woke up in our own house."

I looked around blissfully. How beautiful! It was snowing at last!

"I didn't expect it to snow so soon", said my mother coming up beside me.

"What can I say? It's a Christmas miracle!"



PANCIU OCTAVIAN

cls. a VI-a, Școală Gimnazială "Titu Maiorescu" Iași



The World of Snowmen

Have you ever wondered where snowmen go when they melt? Well, that's what Steve, a 10 year old boy, wanted to find out. To do that, he just decided to stand right next to a snowman that he made a few days prior while it was melting. When half of the snowman was melted, he started standing on it and when the snowman was melted all the way, Steve saw a bottomless blue tunnel under the snowman that made him dizzy just by looking at it. Could it be a portal, to another world, perhaps?

Then, Steve started feeling very strange... and very cold. Soon, he saw everything around him turn into snow. He was being transported to another world: the World of Snowmen.

The boy then heard a mysterious, high pitched voice:

"Hey, can you hear me?"

"Who are you?" said Steve, very confused. "Where am I?"

"You're the first person to ever come here!"

"Oh, wow, so it really worked!" said Steve.

"What worked? If you did something in the human world, then I probably won't know because snowmen are only conscious in this world."

"Well, I just stood right next to you while you were melting, and I think that transported me with you to this world. By the way, totally unrelated to what we were talking about, do you have a name?"

"Do I have a... what?"

"A name! You know, how other people, or in your case, snowmen, call you."

"Oh, okay. Well, no, I don't have a 'name', but I guess having one could be quite useful. Maybe you could give me one?"

"Sure! What about... Billy?"

"That sounds nice! I think I'll go with that."

Then, Steve started looking around and said:

"You know, this place kind of looks like the place that I live in", the boy said. "Actually, it looks a lot like it, but much more... snowy."

"Actually, this world is exactly like your world!" said Billy. "And when someone builds something, it also appears in our world!"

Steve then saw what seemed to be his favorite plush but made out of ice in a house that looked very similar to the boy's house in the human world. He asked Billy if he can go there and take it and he agreed. After that, Steve said:

"I'm very cold right now, so do you know how I can go back to my world?"

"Yes, I do, actually. There's an old snowman that can make portals to other worlds, so maybe he can help you go back to yours."

"Well then, let's go!"

And so, Steve and Billy started their journey to the old snowman. A while later, Steve

noticed a strange old hut at the end of the road. It was the old snowman's house. Then, they went inside and the old snowman told them that in order for him to make a portal to the human world, he will need a few ingredients: an object from the human world and an object from the World of Snowmen. For the object from the human world, Steve gave the old snowman a penny that he had in his pocket. The old snowman then took it and gently put it on the frozen floor of the hut.

"Sorry, Steve, but I think you will have to give him the ice plush that you found, said Billy."

"Why? There are lots of other things that we can use, right?"

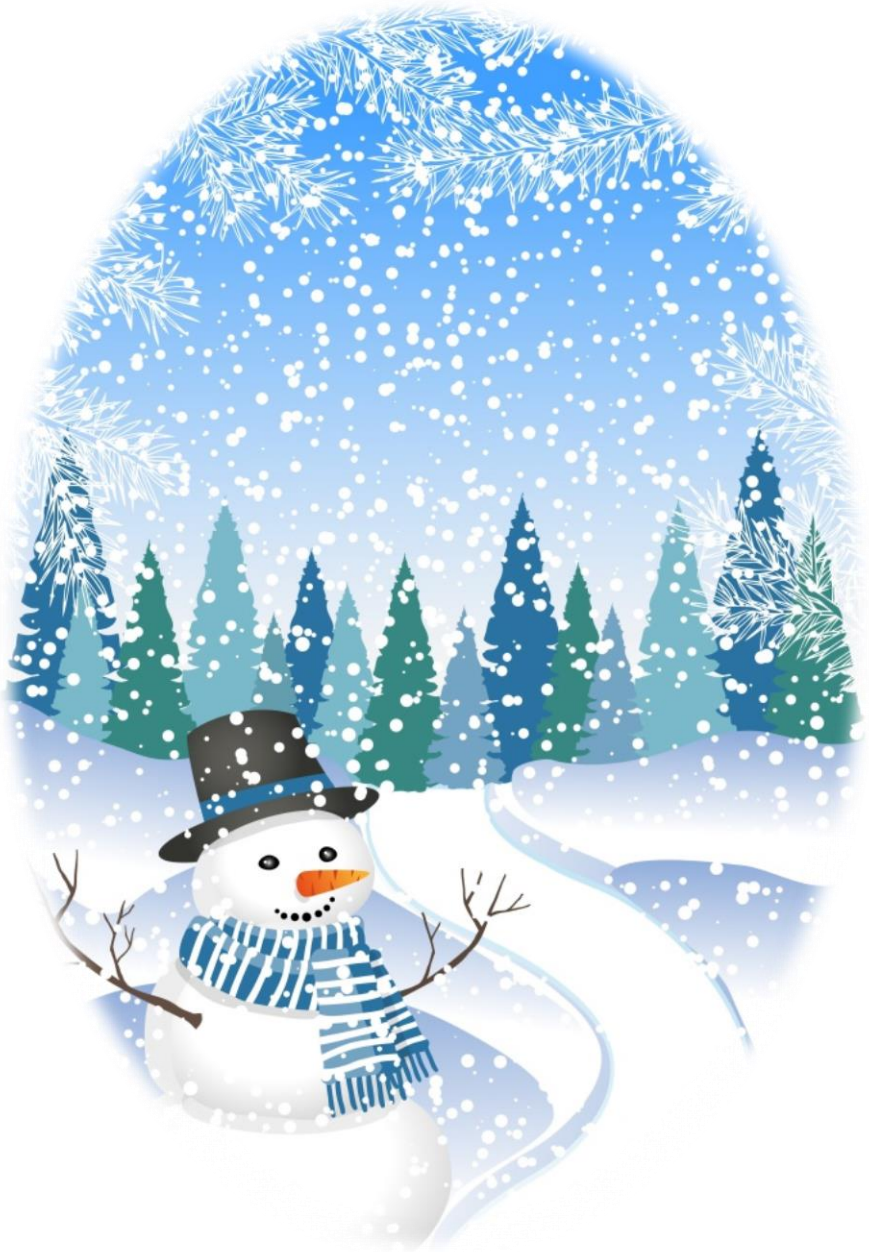
"Actually, no, there aren't, because only a few objects turn into ice, while others turn into snow, so you can't even pick them up without breaking them."

"Oh. So... do I really have to do this...?"

"If you want to go home, then yes, you have to."

Despite not wanting to, Steve then gives the old snowman his ice plush. After a while, the blue tunnel appeared again and Steve was transported back to his world, and he kept making snowmen every winter, knowing that they are alive in the World of Snowmen.







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